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Testimony of
MARK B. GLICK, Chief Energy Officer

before the
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CONSUMER PROTECTION & COMMERCE

Tuesday, April 1, 2025
2:00 PM
State Capitol, Conference Room 329 and Videoconference

In Support of
HCR 58, HD1

REQUESTING THE HAWAII STATE ENERGY OFFICE TO CONVENE A GEOTHERMAL ENERGY WORKING GROUP TO EVALUATE THE REGULATORY AND POLICY LANDSCAPE SURROUNDING GEOTHERMAL ENERGY IN HAWAII.

Chair Matayoshi, Vice Chair Chun, and Members of the Committee, the Hawai'i State Energy Office (HSEO) supports HCR 58, HD1, which requests HSEO to convene a geothermal energy working group to evaluate the regulatory and policy landscape surrounding geothermal energy in Hawai'i.

The state's energy transition to 100% RPS by 2045 will require the full diversity of available renewable resource options, despite much of the focus being on affordable and abundant intermittent solar and wind resources. Geothermal is a firm and dispatchable abundant renewable energy resource that has enormous potential as an affordable means of energy security and reliability and serve as to have a transformative effect on Hawai'i's energy ecosystem.

Potential roadblocks to advancing geothermal energy development include 1) a lack of data on the geothermal and groundwater resources (resource potential) that exist, as well as uncertainty regarding the regulatory conditions for the permitting and construction of a new geothermal energy production plant. Relating to the understanding of resource potential, in 2024, Governor Josh Green, M.D., allocated \$5 million from the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund for slim-hole geothermal

resource characterization to identify possible locations for viable geothermal energy deployment. HSEO is working with the University of Hawai'i's Groundwater and Geothermal Resource Center (HGGRC) to conduct this resource assessment, building on their research and the existing body of knowledge. However, more funding is needed to determine the resource potential statewide. Relating to the uncertain regulatory conditions, a review of policy and regulations leading to actionable recommendations could make the barrier to geothermal energy production more attainable.

HSEO recognizes that, as stated in the resolution, "a coordinated, transparent, and community-inclusive process is essential to evaluating the role of geothermal energy in Hawai'i". Accordingly, HSEO notes that the members listed in the current working group may not adequately represent the Native Hawaiian community. However, HSEO is committed to ensuring that appropriate community organizations are invited to join the working group, as permitted by this resolution.

HSEO emphasizes that a key priority of the State, and a foundation of the working group, should be guided by the understanding of the underlying geothermal resource potential. HSEO appreciates the Committee on Energy & Environmental Protections' amendments to extend the deadline for the report.

This working group could allow HSEO and other stakeholders the ability to find viable solutions for allowing the potential of geothermal energy production to become a larger reality as we move towards our clean energy goals.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.